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FROM A BOOK FUND COMMEMORATING
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It's a sad thing
when a man is to be so soon forgotten
And the shining in his soul
gone from the earth
With no thing remaining;

And it's a sad thing
when a man shall die
And forget love
which is the shiningness of life;

But it's a sadder thing
that a man shall forget love
And he not dead but walking in the field
of a May morning
And listening to the voice of the thrush.

—R.G.A., in *A Yearbook of
Stanford Writing*, 1931

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REGINA ET IMPERATRIX

A Jubilee Song from Ireland

1887

BY

GEORGE FRANCIS ARMSTRONG

M.A., D.Litt.

LONDON

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1887.

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VICTORIA

Regina et Imperatrix

A JUBILEE SONG FROM IRELAND

1887

I. 1.

WILD Harp of Erin, thou whose strings
So long have trembled with the tones of sorrow,
Whose sullen ominous vibratings
So oft the passionate furies borrow
Of breasts that brood on ancient wrongs,
That thou hast half forgot the gentle songs
That made thy name a sweetness in the world,
Breathe to-day a softer strain,
Let the wings of Love be furled
Round thy sterner chords, and rain
Such music on the winds that they who hear
May hail once more the voice of happier days,
And know the ardent heart of Heber's race
With all its kindest instincts to the ear
Throbs out melodious joys and raptures deep and clear.

I. 2.

Wake, long-slumbering harmonies ! . .
Here, as by the Wicklow seas,
Standing in the winds that blow
 Blithe and gay from Albion's Isle,
I behold in summer's glow
O'er the waves, i' the eastern skies,
 'Mid the radiant sunbeam's smile,
Britain's azure mountains rise,
How my pulses leap in me
With a fervid sympathy,
Thinking on the joys that sway,
Yonder, England's heart to-day !

I. 3.

O mightiest England, shall not we
 Exult as thine abounding life rejoices,
With as rich an ecstasy ? . .
 Hark ! Ierna's jubilant voices
Swell the gathering sound of praise and prayer
Rising on the rippling air,

O'er the dædal realms that boast
England's blameless Queen their own,
Echoing round her million leagues of coast,
Wafted o'er the winds', the waters', moan,
Rising to the King of Kings,
To call down blessings from the Eternal Springs
Of Love and Peace and Light
On her who through the Fifty Summers flown,
Ennobled by an Empire's might,
Enthroned upon the proud world's proudest throne,
Has worn her lucid diadem unstained,
And held across the measureless lands
Her sceptre mild with ever loyal hands;
Nor ever yet one sovereign right has strained,
Or striven in regal rivalry,
Or let Ambition move her temperate breast,
Or curbed the steeds of sacred Liberty,
Or broke for selfish aims a kingdom's rest;
But, true to that high dream
Of English minds that in the Head Supreme
Of Earth's supremest empire visions still
The incarnation of the People's will,
Welcomed from hour to hour
The tranquil growth of popular power,
And cherished as her best prerogative
The right within her People's loves to live

And feel as hers their lightest bliss or pain,—
True Queen since first the imperial round she bore,
True Queen, true Wife, true Mother, evermore
Unchanged through all her widening Empire's gain
And all the deathless deeds and splendours of her reign.

II. 1.

HUSHED is the wail of discontent,
All memories of old griefs are lulled in slumber ;
Revenge and Hate, their frenzy spent,
No more the kindly heart encumber,
And Joy alone and Love abide,
And to the angel Peace our doors are wide.
We think of her in whose imperial name
Through her royal seasons bright
England's best have striven to tame
Lingering tyrannies and to right
The old Wrong in purblind haste and anger done,
And mingle with our love of England's Queen
Our benison for what of good hath been,
Joint-labourers in her Empire's triumphs won
Through Fifty wheels of flight around the steadfast sun.

II. 2.

Yes, for ours it is to claim
Even as ours her Empire's fame;
Ours the tranquil light that glows
O'er her Fifty Years of sway,
All the radiance that arose
At the rising of that Star,
Gentle, pure, serene of ray,
Toward whose lustre seen afar
Down the horizons dim of Time
Men will yearn in every clime,
Murmuring, 'What might Earth attain
Could Victoria come again!'

II. 3.

We, whose impetuous sons have bled
For thee, O Queen, on many a field of glory,
Laying low the languid head
'Mid the dust with slaughter gory,
Happy for their peerless Queen to die,
Breathing with their latest sigh

Thy belovèd name whose charm
Set the soul of Courage free,
Nerved with magic might the battling arm,
Soothed the dying soldier's agony ;
We, who oft have borne the sword
High in wild war amid the death-fires poured
O'er India's burning plains,
Or 'mid the thirsty sands of Africa,
The Euxine's weary snows and rains,
Have fought for thee, revered Victoria,
For thee, amid the fiercest of the strife,
Knit with thine English warriors bold
In fervent brotherhood,—O Queen, behold,
Through all thy future stainless years of life
Our hearts, our swords, our lives are thine,
To guard thy feet, whatever foes assail ;
Thine, too, these hands, in every golden mine
Of peaceful operance, till their strength shall fail ;
To thee we consecrate,
With whatsoever skill we serve the State,
The utmost harvest that our toil shall yield,
In Science, Art, in labours of the field,
Or venturous enterprise—
(If such might add in anywise
A lustre to thy name or to thy crown),—
That with thy glorious Age's long renown

Our best may be remembered, and that we,
Absorbed amid the effulgence of the beams
Of that unquenchable clear light that streams
From thy high Throne afar from sea to sea,
May share throughout all Time thine immortality.

III. 1.

WAKE, Harp of Erin, yet once more,
Waft to the mountain-winds another measure,
Thy holiest strain to Heaven outpour
With all thine affluent music's treasure,
And praise the Eternal God whose arm
Hath shielded Britain's gentlest Queen from harm,
And robed her realms with honour year on year;
Praise the God who gave to us
That fair Fount of virtues clear
Flowing down irriguous
From England's Throne to every English home,
And that Ensample high of Womanhood
Walking erect the paths of Right and Good,
Whatever shadow veiled her sight with gloom,
Whatever tempest passed with thunderings as of doom.

III. 2.

Praise to Him—to whom we pray
Still to lengthen out the day
Of her triumphs, still to shower
All His light about her feet,
All His love from hour to hour,
That our children's ears may hear
Long the living music sweet
Of the Name that we revere
Breathed, a dear familiar word,
Morn by morn as we have heard,
And her silent influence feel
Moulding yet her Empire's weal.

III. 3.

O God of Gods, Eternal King,
On through her years of ever-brightening splendour
Far from her let Evil wing
Still his sunless way; defend her
From the shaft of every sorrow; spare
That one heart the doom of Care;

Powerless at her borders hold
England's foemen east and west ;
Hourly all her subject peoples fold
Close and closer to her sovereign breast ;
Whatsoever cloud may loom
Athwart her Kingdoms dash to idle fume ;
Let never frenzy-driven
Blind Lawlessness within them lift its head ;
Strike, Father, swiftly from Thy Heaven
The Social Anarch on our threshold dead ;
And quench, ere risen, Disorder's headless powers ;
And still let Freedom's field increase
With that calm growth that yieldeth only peace ;
And Knowledge full in fructifying showers
From Thine ethereal heights be shed ;
And fleeting Truth be found, and Light prevail,
Though rough the ways wherethrough our feet be led,
Though many a time in wild pursuit we fail ;
And beauty-breathing Arts
Bear their keen raptures to her People's hearts,
And all the sweets of May around her cling,
And all her realms with warbled music ring,
And chains of holiest Love,
Down-dropping from Thy throne above,
Her myriad lieges' lives and hers with Thine,
O Father, in one golden girdle twine ;

That this our noon amid her glories passed
May seem an earnest of that Happiness
(Far off, where never fears or griefs oppress)
For which, by whatsoever doubts o'ercast,
We yearn, and we believe awaits Thy worlds at last.

BRAY, Co. WICKLOW :

June, 1887.

PRINTED BY
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